



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

December 5, 2006

Ronald Hillard, State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture
75 High Street, Room 301
Morgantown, WV 26505

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement – Draft Watershed Plan for the Voluntary Floodplain Buyout of the Dunloup Creek Watershed. CEQ# 20060437

Dear Mr. Hillard:

In accordance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above mentioned DEIS. The DEIS was prepared to meet the requirements of NEPA and to assess the potential environmental harm that may result from the proposed activity. The purposes of the project are to reduce flood-related damage to property within the 100 year floodplain of Dunloup Creek and to protect the health and safety of people.

The DEIS evaluated the Buyout Alternative and a No Action scenario in detail. The preferred alternative for the DEIS is to voluntarily buyout 292 residential properties in the Dunloup Creek watershed. Human health and safety will improve as residents relocate from the floodplain. Natural floodplain functions will be restored as the homestead areas are returned to riparian stream habitat and natural floodplain vegetation. Water quality will improve with the removal of homes with failing or non-existent septic systems. Stream bank erosion will be reduced as areas along the stream are converted from mowed yards to natural stream banks

EPA is rating the preferred alternative as Lack of Objection (LO). For more information on our rating guidelines please go to: www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/comments/ratings.html. EPA agrees with the identified preferred alternative to voluntarily buyout residential properties in the watershed and allow the watershed to return to a natural state.

Should you have any question regarding this matter please feel free to contact Jamie Davis of my staff at 215-814-5569.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Arguto", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

William Arguto
NEPA Team Leader

